

Community, Commitment, Cooperation ***Moving Forward Together***

For Immediate Release

Joan Ivory, Gemma Raeburn-Baynes and Aline Visser honoured for outstanding contributions to the vitality of English-speaking Quebec

MONTREAL, SEPTEMBER 20, 2011 – The Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) is pleased to announce the winners of the third annual Sheila and Victor Goldbloom Distinguished Community Service Award which celebrates individuals who have gone above and beyond in contributing to the vitality and understanding of English-speaking Quebec. This year's laureates are an outstanding trio of women: Aline Visser, Gemma Raeburn-Baynes, and Joan Ivory.

“Faced with sensationally well-qualified nominees the jury had an impossible task,” commented QCGN Past President and Jury chair Linda Leith, who noted the winners are all examples of people who are truly committed to their communities. “The QCGN is delighted to be in a position to honour three remarkable women who have made a difference to the lives of English-speaking Quebecers.”

Joan Ivory has been a tireless volunteer who is described as a prodigious worker who does her homework and contributes actively. Her longstanding commitment to the McGill University Health Center (MUHC) and its founding hospitals began years ago when she was a young volunteer in the admissions office of the Royal Victoria Hospital. Since then she has served on the foundations, boards and committees of the Royal Vic, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and the Montreal Chest Institute where she was a passionate and articulate advocate who helped bring about improved patient care through renovations and new equipment. Mrs. Ivory has also been a major volunteer for the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, has been active in the National Ballet of Canada and Vermont Public Television, and has been involved in the Faculty of Music of McGill University where she has been a longtime member of the Faculty Advisory Committee.

Gemma Raeburn-Baynes is best known as the founder and president of “A Taste of the Caribbean” food festival that celebrates Montreal’s vibrant Caribbean English culture and gives Culinary scholarships to disenfranchised English-speaking youths through its Triumph Through Adversity program. An avid community fundraiser who is very active in Montreal’s Black communities, Mrs. Raeburn-Baynes is also the founder of several non-profit organizations promoting language, culture, and identity for Montreal’s English-speaking and Caribbean youth. Throughout her various community commitments and contributions, Mrs. Raeburn-Baynes leads by example and bridges all communities in Quebec by promoting tolerance and acceptance of people of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Aline Visser is a lifelong volunteer with an extensive list of involvements in the fields of education, health and community development in her local community of Thetford Mines, the Greater French and English-speaking communities, and at the provincial and national level. Active in women's, youth and mental health issues, the indefatigable Mrs. Visser is a founding member of the Megantic English-speaking Community Development Corporation (MCDC), has sat on the boards of both Voice of English-speaking Quebec (VEQ) and Townshippers' Association, and has served as Vice-President and as Chair of the Executive Committee of the Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC). She also sits on the board of the Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de Chaudière-Appalaches, is president of the Thetford health and social service center (CSSS), and sits on the provincial committee that advises the government on access to health and social services in English.

The Awards will be presented during a community recognition evening hosted by Rob Lurie of CTV news that will be held at Montreal's prestigious St. James Club on October 22.

The Sheila and Victor Goldbloom Distinguished Community Service Award was launched during the 15th anniversary celebrations of the QCGN in 2009 individuals who have built bridges of understanding between Quebecers of different backgrounds. The Network was honoured to name its community service award after Dr. and Mrs. Goldbloom who embody the values the award seeks to honour.

The winners were selected by a jury of outstanding Quebecers that included Linda Leith, former McGill Chancellor Gretta Chambers and past laureates of the award including community volunteer and lawyer Alex Paterson, health care advocate Marjorie Goodfellow from the Eastern Townships and theatre icon Elsa Bolam of Geordie Productions.

For more details on the Award, [click here](#).

The Quebec Community Groups Network (www.qcgn.ca) is a not-for-profit organization bringing together 38 English-language community organizations across Quebec. Its mission is to identify, explore and address strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of English-speaking Quebec and to encourage dialogue and collaboration among its member organizations, individuals, community groups, institutions and leaders.

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